

Andrew Jackson to Richard Mentor Johnston, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO RICHARD M. JOHNSON.¹

¹ A letter from Jackson to Col. William L. Newton, Sept. 8, 1828, is very similar to this letter in thought and form of expression. Perhaps this letter was written about the same time.

Hermitage, September, 1828.

My Dear sir, I have received your kind letter of the 22d ult. and hasten to reply to it.

The result of your elections has been as favourable to the cause of the people as could have been expected, when the active and conspicuous part Mr Barry had taken in your relief and new Court system is taken into view. Breathets election² was a surer test of the wish of the people on the great national question which was agitated, and the number in your legislature opposed to the administration, shews that the majority of the people are dicidedly against it.

² John Breathitt, elected lieutenant governor of Kentucky, though Barry was defeated.

Had you my Dr. sir reflected that I am not a candidate for the Presidency by my own volition, but by the selection of the people, you would not for a moment entertain the idea, that it would be proper for me now to adopt the electioneering course pursued by our travelling cabinet. I have long since announced my principles to the nation and in pursuance of them have been silent amidst the violent torrents of the vilest calumny ever heaped upon man, leaving to the virtue of the people my Justification. Being thus brought

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out by the people, it is for them without any agency of mine to sustain me, for I will not *abandon principle* to secure to myself the highest Boon.

When we see a travelling cabinet ranging over the continent, wielding its patronage for the purpose of corrupting the elective franchise and thereby inflicting a wound on our national character not easily to be washed out, it behoves me at least, to shew by my acts that the professions I have made were based upon principle, and that I will not depart from them. My enemies would delight to see me *now* entering upon an electioneering tour, it would realise the saying ascribed to Mr Adams, “that he would turn democrat and urge them into such extravagance that the whole people would become disgusted with our government, and cry out for a change”. The people having taken me up must determine the canvass themselves, without any agency of mine. If they succeed, then it can with truth be said, that virtue has triumphed over the corrupting influence of executive patronage and designing Demagogues. *The people must themselves Triumph* —a great principle is at stake, and if they do, then it can be said all power flows from them, and when their agents violate their declared will, they will be hurld from their confidence. Then will our Republican form of government endure forever, but if the dictation of designing demagogues be acknowledged, freedom and independence are gone. I do not despair of the republic.

I salute thee affectionately, and tender to you my best wishes, yrs 30